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and prototype of the works in question is designated as *ἀρεταλογία* and its authors were called *ἀρεταλόγοι*. The explanation of these terms, their development and application, forms the first part of Reitzenstein's volume; the second part is devoted to the *Acta Thorneae* and to a demonstration of the *provenance* of its form in accordance with the results obtained in Part I. The treatment stops short of as full a discussion of the canonical Acts as the reader's curiosity craves, but certainly one cannot complain of a paucity of documents considered. Yet with all recognition of the intricacy of the problem and of the service to scholarship which Reitzenstein has performed, it must be said that the learned and distinguished author has failed to present his results in a reasonably clear and comprehensible form. The book is (so far as the main argument goes) desperately hard reading, and the fault is not wholly due to the character of the problem involved. One discovers that there is material here for surprise and fascination, but emotion fades before a baffling obscurity of treatment. The work is rich in suggestive details which touch a much wider range of literature than is revealed by the title, or than can be indicated by a notice so brief as this must necessarily be. The reader will find in the course of Reitzenstein's argument stimulating and fruitful discussions of the theory of ancient historiography, of Roman satire in relation to Greek prototypes, of elegy and biography, not to mention a large number of detailed observations which shed much light upon particular works and passages.

G. L. HENDRICKSON

Vorträge und Aufsätze. Von HERMANN USENER. Leipzig: Teubner, 1907.

In the year 1888, at an age (fifty-four) when most scholars have already either done their best work, or at least have clearly outlined the character and direction of the subsequent work that may be expected from them, Usener began that great series of studies in the history of religion and mythology which have done most to give his name a peculiar eminence in the scholarship of our time. In that year the first of the *Religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (the memorable *Weihnachtsfest*) appeared; memorable certainly to the writer of these lines, then a student at Bonn and a witness of the sensation which the book caused in the vivid intellectual life of the university. It had had forerunners, to be sure, in some lesser publications of earlier date, as, for example, the *Legenden der Pelagia* which forms one of the most interesting studies of the present volume. From this time on, with the exception of the edition of the rhetorical works of Dionysius, Usener's studies and publications were devoted almost exclusively to religious origins and mythology, until for some years before his death (in 1905) he had come to be

looked upon as the founder of a largely conceived Religionswissenschaft. The programme of this conception is outlined with splendid enthusiasm and grasp in the essay entitled *Mythologie* (of the year 1904), which is probably the most important of the papers making up this volume. In general it is to be said that those studies which touch upon the central intents of his later years seem the most vital and significant. Two of the longest, *Philologie und Geschichtswissenschaft* (1882) and *Organisation der wissenschaftlichen Arbeit* (1884), attracted much attention at the time of their appearance, but they have not the present vitality of the religious and mythological themes. In the early eighties, when the academic lecture course on "Encyclopädie und Methodologie" was still in full vigor, the effort to define classical philology and to differentiate it from historical science was a livelier topic than it is today. Usener's treatment of the problem and his solution of it was once revealed gospel for his pupils, and certainly no one can now read it without much clarification of thought. But time and resignation in the undefinable have robbed it of something of its pristine brilliancy.

Taken all in all the *Vorträge und Aufsätze* form a volume of remarkable interest, which must prove fruitful and stimulating not only through its positive content, but also for the example of method and presentation which it affords. Those who knew Usener as a man between fifty and sixty years of age will find the portrait, which forms the frontispiece, at once characteristic and disappointing. One may conjecture that the affliction of partial blindness caused a contraction of eyes and brow in his later years, which at least in the representation here given has robbed his face of that largeness and nobility of expression, combined with a flashing eye, which no one of his pupils can forget.

G. L. HENDRICKSON

The Deification of Abstract Ideas in Roman Literature and Inscriptions. By HAROLD L. AXTELL. Chicago dissertation. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1907. Pp. 100. 75 cents.

This study is divided into two parts. In the first Dr. Axtell considers the deified abstracts as individual cults under the following heads: (1) state-cults, (2) abstracts popularly but not officially worshiped, (3) occasional and individual deifications, and (4) doubtful examples; in the second part he deals with the deified abstracts as a class, and treats them as to (1) their origin, (2) their mention in literature, and (3) their appearance in inscriptions.

The most important part of this dissertation is the discussion (pp. 59-67) of the origin of abstract deifications, in which the author takes reasonable issue with certain current notions. On the question of origin